

I am committed to providing our nation's veterans with access to top of the line care and benefits. These brave men and women have made the ultimate commitment to our nation. While we will never be able to fully repay them for their service, it is imperative that we do all that we can to care for them.

Unfortunately, for far too long, programs meant to support our veterans were underfunded and mismanaged. Many veterans received delayed and inadequate care. I am proud to say that the 110th Congress recognized these shortfalls and made record investments in the Veterans Administration (VA) to address them. In just the past two years, this Congress provided a \$16 billion increase in funding for the VA, which will allow it to expand and improve current facilities; hire additional personnel to reduce the wait time faced by many veterans; and continue research focused on injuries such as traumatic brain injury and post traumatic stress disorder.

Earlier this year I joined Congressman Harry Mitchell of Arizona in introducing the Post-9/11 Veterans Education Assistance Act, H.R. 5740. This historic legislation, which was signed into law on June 30, 2008 as part of the fiscal year 2008 Supplemental Appropriations Act, restores Congress' commitment to providing veterans with access to a college education. The bill provides eligible veterans with tuition assistance equal to the cost of in-state tuition and a monthly stipend meant to offset the cost of living. In Connecticut, veterans will receive on average \$21,731 a year - a dramatic increase over the previous education benefit of approximately \$11,000 a year.

Although we have made great strides over the past two years in improving the lives of our veterans, I recognize that we are far from finished. As we begin the 111th Congress, please know that I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues and President-elect Obama to ensure that we are doing all that we can to honor the commitment and sacrifice made by each of these American heroes.

For more information on veterans' health care benefits please [click here](#) .

For information on the services my office can provide to veterans please [click here](#) .

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